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MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE: LEGALIST, ANTONIMIANIST AND SITUATIONIST STRATEGIES OF MORALITY MANAGEMENT ACCORDING TO JOSEPH FLETCHER

Summary: This article presents three approaches to morality management: legalist, antinomian and situationist. It indicates the significance of the situationist conception of morality management for the contemporary management and management sciences.

Key words: Management, Management Ethics, Moral Philosophy, Morality Management

Introduction

Axiological assumptions play important role in the strategic management theories and practice, because some values are ultimate aims of strategies and criteria of efficiency, economy,⁶⁶ success,⁶⁷ and risk⁶⁸ of actions.⁶⁹ These comments can rise several questions: Are all values universal, or just some? Does the managerial planning discover moral values, or it can create them? Can or should managers arbitrary decide about moral values? There are some opposite general answers to the above questions: realist versus antirealist, absolute versus relativistic, and universal versus particular.⁷⁰

This article presents Joseph Francis Fletcher's (1905-1991) understanding of legalism, antinomianism and situationism.⁷¹ As we will show, they imply three partially opposite answers to the above questions – legalist (extremely realist,

⁶⁶ Ackoff R. L., *Re-Creating the Corporation: A Design of Organizations for the 21st Century*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1999; Gössling T., "The Price of Morality. An Analysis of Personality, Moral Behaviour, and Social Rules in Economic Terms," *Journal of Business Ethics* 45, no. 1/2 (June 1, 2003), pp. 121-131; Moore G., "Re-Imagining the Morality of Management: A Modern Virtue Ethics Approach," *Business Ethics Quarterly* 18, no. 4, 2008, pp. 483-511.

⁶⁷ Pruzan P., "From Control to Values-Based Management and Accountability," *Journal of Business Ethics* 17, no. 13, 1998, pp. 1379-1394.

⁶⁸ Keeney R. L., *The Role of Values in Risk Management*, [in:] *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 545, no. 1, 1996, pp. 126-134.

⁶⁹ Freeman R. E., D. R. Gilbert, E. Hartman, *Values and the Foundations of Strategic Management* [in:] *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 7, no. 11, 1988, p. 822.

⁷⁰ Carroll A. B., *Models of Management Morality for the New Millennium* [in:] *Business Ethics Quarterly*, Vol. 11, no. 2, 2001, pp. 365-271; MacIntyre A., *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame, Ind., University of Notre Dame Press, 2007; Rossouw G. J., L. J. van Vuuren, *Modes of Managing Morality: A Descriptive Model of Strategies for Managing Ethics*, [in:] *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 46, no. 4, 2003, pp. 389-402.

⁷¹ Fletcher is one of founders, pioneers and best-known popular exponents of ethical situationism. Ethical situationism can also be called "situationism", "situation ethics", "situational ethics", "contextualism", "consequentialism" or "contextual ethics". Situationism has also been called "ethical existentialism", "ethical actualism", "ethical individualism", "morality according to situations." The terms are effectively synonymous. Rather than a complete philosophical system, they refer to a certain style of thought and morality, developed in literature, as much as in ethics. See: Gustafson J., *Context Versus Principles: A Misplaced Debate in Christian Ethics*, [in:] *Harvard Theological Review*, 58, 1965, p. 172; McCormick R. A. (1981) *Notes on Moral Theology: 1965 through 1980*, Washington, Lanham, pp. 74-75. In this work, "situation ethics" or "situationism" refer to ethics of Fletcher.

absolutist and universal), antinomian (extremely antirealist, relativistic and particular) and situationist (moderate realist, relativist and particular). In conclusions we will indicate the significance of the situationist answer to the above questions for the contemporary management and management sciences.

Fletcher developed his version of situation ethics in reaction against legalism and antinomianism. He maintains that situation ethics avoids the mistakes of these two approaches, while preserving their advantages. Fletcher does not develop any complete conception of legalism and antinomianism, but rather point out a few (in his opinion essential) features of these approaches.⁷²

Legalism

As Fletcher maintains legalists take individual situations as concrete manifestations of "given" universal rules. This is the legalist (metaphysical) universalism. They assume that moral goods (specific moral values) are real (objective) properties of objects (actions, states of affairs, procedures, etc). This is the legalist assumption of the "intrinsic theory of goodness" (intrinsicism).⁷³ In consequence, as he maintains, legalism demands a respect for some objects, as if they were intrinsically good.⁷⁴ As he writes, the legalist's "law-bound conscience ... reifies good and evil, treating value as if it were a thing-in-itself (Kant's *Ding-an-sich*)...."⁷⁵ Fletcher assigns Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas and Immanuel Kant among others to legalism. We will not discuss the question of the relevance of the situationist critique to these philosophers. The main objective of this section is to outline the situationist understanding of legalism.⁷⁶

Fletcher thinks that due to the above philosophical assumptions (universalism and intrinsicism) legalist theories fail to appreciate the inner dimension of human actions - their intentions. He accuses legalistic ethics of mixing two differing dimensions of morality: the goodness (love, good will, good intention) and the rightness ("fittingness") of actions. Fletcher refers to the traditional distinction between (lat.) *benivolentia* and (lat.) *beneficentia*.⁷⁷ He writes:

⁷² The words "legalist" and "antinomianist" ("antinomian") can denote: (a) one who makes decisions according to legalistic or antinomian methods of decision making; (b) one who is convinced of legalism or antinomianism; or (c) one who defends these approaches as theories.

⁷³ Fletcher J., *Situation ethics*..., op.cit., 58, 66

⁷⁴ Fletcher J., *Situation ethics*..., op.cit., p. 68

⁷⁵ Fletcher J., *Situation ethics*..., op.cit., p. 67

⁷⁶ Fletcher J., *Situation ethics*..., op.cit., p.16. Some thinkers have shown how these philosophers can be interpreted to avert the shortcomings of legalism as indicated by Fletcher. Among others, see: Häring B., *Das Gesetz Christi; Moraltheologie, Dargestellt Für Priester Und Laien*, Freiburg im Breisgau, E. Wewel, 1957; Häring B., *Ethics of Manipulation: Issues in Medicine, Behavior Control and Genetics*, New York, Seabury Press, 1975; Anderson R. K., "Ethics of Manipulation: Issues in Medicine, Behavior Control and Genetics by Bernard Häring," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 45, no. 2, 1977, pp. 265-267; Szostek A., *Natura, rozum, wolność: filozoficzna analiza koncepcji twórczego rozumu we współczesnej teologii moralnej*, Lublin, Wydawnictwo KUL, 1989.

⁷⁷ Fletcher J., *Situation ethics*..., op.cit., p.105.

- it is very important for us to be clear about the distinction between good or evil on the one hand, and right and wrong on the other. Good and evil have to do with the motives or intentions of the moral agent - that is to say, the values he seeks to serve. Right and wrong have to do with our judgment about the act itself. It is entirely possible for a man with good intentions to do a wrong thing, just as it is ironically possible for a man with evil intentions to do the right thing. An act is right or wrong according to whether or not it serves the well-being of people. It is good or evil according to whether it is motivated by living concern or malice.⁷⁸

The author is aware that this distinction came from the "legalist" scholastics. Yet, as he maintains, even where legalists distinguish goodness and rightness, their theory of intrinsic goodness cripples the distinction. He finds legalism reducing moral goodness to legal rightness, and moral evil to legal wrongness and he attempt to show that legalists tend to identify the moral with the legal order. Fletcher considers this reductionism a necessary consequence of the theory of intrinsic value.⁷⁹

Fletcher believes that the above philosophical assumptions indicate the legalistic method of decision making. As he maintains, in legalism:

- one enters into every decision-making situation encumbered with a whole apparatus of prefabricated rules and regulations. Not just the spirit but the letter of law reigns. Its principles, codified in rules, are not merely guidelines or maxims to illuminate the situation: they are **directors** to be followed.⁸⁰

Fletcher sees the legalistic morality as injuring both the objects (the neighbor) and the subjects of decisions. He points out that the legalism does not care about people, invoking legalists to serve rules rather than persons. In effect, legalism hurts all those who come into contact with legalists.⁸¹

For Fletcher, legalism distorts the notion of justice: judging only the external dimensions of human actions, abstracted from their intentions. He points out examples where a legalistic notion of justice leads to injustice and to absurd solutions, where innocent people suffer and "law wins".⁸²

Fletcher maintains that the subject of legalistic decisions may suffer more than its persons-objects, in that he gives up his freedom, deciding according to the deduction of written law. As Fletcher suggests, legalism warps the cognitive faculty of human conscience, offering, as he adjudges, but a mechanical consideration of "the good in abstract", instead of considering real, concrete goods. In this way legalistic morality is reduced to the fulfilment of the law, and loses the character of recognition of and responding to real imperatives. Fletcher stresses that responsible decision making involves knowing and considering the consequences of action. By shunning the effort of calculating consequences, he claims, legalists make irresponsible decisions - they choose the "easy way" of

⁷⁸ J. F. Fletcher, T. A. Wassmer, *Hello, Lovers!: An Introduction to Situation Ethics*, Washington, Corpus Books, 1970, p. 47.

⁷⁹ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op.cit., p. 134-145.

⁸⁰ J. F. Fletcher, *Situation Ethics: The New Morality*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966, p.16.

⁸¹ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op.cit., p. 20-21.

⁸² J. F. Fletcher, *Moral Responsibility: Situation Ethics at Work*, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1967, p. 49.

fulfilment of the law.⁸³ As Fletcher maintains, the legalist method of decision making focuses on rules, and "it turns selfish, childish, soft, subverting".⁸⁴ In effect, he concludes, legalism leads to decisions against conscience which are immoral by definition.⁸⁵

Antinomianism

Fletcher considers antinomianism as a sort of polar opposite to legalism. He analyzes antinomianism at the example of existentialism of Jean Paul Sartre. As Fletcher maintains, the starting point for antinomianism is 'nausea', which is "our anxious experience of the **incoherence** of reality".⁸⁶ He maintains that this experience has been generalized by antinomians, who assume that every moment of existence, every situation, is radically discontinuous, particular, individual, unrepeatable, "without past or future. There is no web of life or connective tissue between episodes or situations in human experience".⁸⁷ In consequence, antinomians refuse "to admit to any **generally** valid principles at all, nothing even ordinarily valid, to say nothing of universal laws".⁸⁸ As Fletcher maintains, the above assumptions justify the antinomian method of decision making. As he writes, according to the antinomian approach:

- one enters into a decision-making situation armed with no principles or maxims whatsoever, to say nothing of rules. In every 'existential moment' or 'unique' situation, it declares that one must rely upon the situation itself, **there and then**, to provide its ethical solution.⁸⁹

In spite of his sympathy for the antinomianism, Fletcher does not agree with the antinomian radical nominalism and the antinomian method of decision making. As Fletcher maintains, antinomianism leads to the ethical relativism, which "... takes the radical form of *de gustibus non disputandum*, so that 'What's one man's meat is another man's poison' (...)." ⁹⁰ The author points out that this relativism leads to ethical irrationalism, because – as he writes – "to be 'absolutely relative' (an uneasy combination of terms) is to be inchoate, random, unpredictable, unjudgeable, meaningless".⁹¹ As he maintains the antinomian method of decision making leads to accidental decisions, according to taste, without any use of cognition and reason.⁹² Fletcher thinks that the antinomian method of decision making can be more harmful than the legalistic one. For the antinomianism justifies selfish, irrational and risky

⁸³ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op.cit., p. 138-139.

⁸⁴ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op.cit., p. 98-99.

⁸⁵ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op.cit., p. 137.

⁸⁶ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op.cit., p. 24-5.

⁸⁷ J. Fletcher, T. Wassmer, *Hello, Lovers!*..., op.cit., p. 63.

⁸⁸ J. Fletcher knows that some existentialists did not want to be so radical as Sartre. Fletcher points out Simone de Beauvoir who "shrinks from candid antinomianism". However, he states that her ontology "is like Sartre's, one of radical discontinuity". Fletcher J., *Situation ethics*..., op.cit., p. 25.

⁸⁹ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op.cit., p. 22.

⁹⁰ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op.cit., p. 44.

⁹¹ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op.cit., p. 44.

⁹² J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op.cit., p. 44.

decisions. Antinomianism is selfish because it demands no respect for other people. It is irrational, because it justifies arbitrary decisions. It is risky, because it gives no method to avoid hurting people.⁹³

Situationism

As Fletcher maintains, the primary objective of situation ethics⁹⁴ are desirable actions and attitudes in its followers: "situation ethics is more ... verb-thinking than ... noun thinking ... It focuses upon **pragma** (doing) not upon **dogma** (some tenet)."⁹⁵ Fletcher intends his theory to be pedagogical, helping people make moral decisions and take moral attitudes. As he writes, situation ethics "does not ask **what** is good but **how** to do good for whom; not what is love but how to **do** the most loving thing possible in the situation."⁹⁶ Situation ethics aims at the project of morality - the "new morality". It is the ultimate goal of situation ethics. Fletcher outlines it in three postulates:

- *law* - *questioned* decision making;
- *love* - *focused* decision making;
- *freedom* - *focused* decision making.

Law - Questioned Decision Making

Fletcher does not reject moral norms and principles. As he postulates, "the situationist enters into every decision-making situation fully armed with the ethical maxims of his community and its heritage and he treats them with respect as illuminators of his problems."⁹⁷ Fletcher just requires questioning the law (moral norms and principles). His intention is to elaborate a method of questioning the law and checking its applicability to the concrete situation.

In this way, situationism to some extent accepts the legalistic method and rejects antinomian anarchism. Fletcher calls moral norms and rules "the wisdom of community." He stresses their key role in the **education** of human conscience. However, he wants to avoid legalism in its absolutization of moral norms and rules. As Fletcher states, "it may be, on some balanced view, that true order presupposes freedom and freedom presupposes order, but just the same, it is the **order** that looms largest in the legalist's eye."⁹⁸ In other words, legalists assume that every decision based on law is morally valuable.⁹⁹

Love-Focused Decision Making

In **love-focused decision making** "Just the same, he [the situationist] is prepared in any situation to compromise [moral norms and principles] or set them aside in the situation if love seems better served by doing so."¹⁰⁰

⁹³ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op. cit., p. 44, 103-119.

⁹⁴ In this work, "situation ethics" or "situationism" refer to ethics of Fletcher.

⁹⁵ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op. cit., p. 52.

⁹⁶ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op. cit., p. 26.

⁹⁷ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op. cit., p. 26.

⁹⁸ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op. cit., p. 137.

⁹⁹ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op. cit., p. 67-86.

¹⁰⁰ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op. cit., p. 26.

Fletcher postulates that ethical theory should focus on those moral decisions that are shared by different cultures and codes of conduct by elaborating on the formal conditions of moral decision-making. Situationists assume that love (good intention, lat. *benevolentia*) is the most universal feature of moral actions. Therefore, they postulate that the focus of decision making should be love. As Fletcher maintains, the principle of love is formal enough to allow the conscience of actors to make decisions based on the unique concrete moral meaning of a situation. Love is material enough, meaningful enough for action, to avoid the "random, unpredictable" decisions of antinomianism.¹⁰¹

Fletcher points out the **commandment of love** as the core-norm of morality. He stresses that all other norms are **relative to the commandment of love**.¹⁰² As he holds, only by relativizing all norms to love can the *unique* moral character of situations and the *autonomy of conscience* and responsibility of decisions. This is why Fletcher accepts the principled ethical relativism. He stresses:

- There must be an absolute or norm of some kind if there is to be any true relativity, (...) the ultimate criterion is (...) 'agapeic love'. It relativizes the absolute, it does not absolutize the relative.¹⁰³

Fletcher points out two formal conditions of love: "good will" and "fittingness." Goodwill is directed toward the "well-being" of neighbors. Fitting decisions effectively promote that "well-being". Fletcher does not maintain that a loving attitude guarantees fitting actions. Fletcher is convinced that this attitude suffices to reveal to the actor what is loving and fitting in concrete situations. For even if a loving actor has committed an act which is not fitting, he can correct himself because of this attitude. Therefore – according to situationism – the most important practical purpose of managing morality is to shape the loving attitudes of people. This postulate has inspired contemporary virtues management ethics.¹⁰⁴

Freedom-Focused Decision Making

The postulate of **freedom-focused decision making** advances the freedom of subjects to decide what is fitting (right) in concrete situations, i.e. what are the fitting means to promote human well being. Fletcher holds that loving decisions assume a risk that must be undertaken. This risk cannot be avoided. It can only be minimized by a careful calculation of consequences and by taking into account the norms, authorities and the *sophia* of the subject's community; but ultimately it is the subject who has to decide and this decision "is a matter of responsibility." (Fletcher, 1966, p. 152). Fletcher is convinced that, in the moment of decision-making, "only the *responsible self in the situation* decides whether the *sophia* can serve love there." (Fletcher, 1966, p. 33)

Situationism demands more than a passive response to the imperative given in each situation. Man must also be *creative*. This *creativity* refers first of all to the

¹⁰¹ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op.cit., p. 44

¹⁰² J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁰³ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics*..., op. cit., p. 44-45

¹⁰⁴ See footnotes 117 and 118.

domain of means: man must discover the best means to the end of love. This end is to serve people, therefore *creativity* is the capacity to find the best possible means to serve people. This *creativity* engages freedom.¹⁰⁵

The Situationist Morality Management

The term "morality" can be used either "descriptively to refer to some codes of conduct put forward by a society or, some other group, such as a religion, or accepted by an individual for her own behavior or normatively to refer to a code of conduct that, given specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational persons."¹⁰⁶ In this section "morality" has the descriptive meaning.

Not each code of conduct is a morality (a code of moral conduct or a moral code of conduct). Morality contains specific norms and rules. They are criteria of moral assessment. They indicate the difference between "right" and "wrong", "good" and "bad", "just" and "unjust" actions (intentions, decisions, behavior, emotions, attitudes) and their outcomes (consequences). Meta-ethical theories specify the criteria and their relation to moral principles (values).

Morality management consists in managing codes of moral conducts. Morality can be the main objective or the side effect of planning. Usually managers manage morality *en route* of managing other objectives. As Anderson notices:

- Managers decide which principles are relevant to a situation and then use these principles as a basis for choosing values and developing standards that make sense in terms of the organization's tasks. ... Value choices influence what people do and how they will do it. The ideas of what is right and what we do usually merge with one another. Empowering workers, for example, increases individual motivation and eventually profit, an important organization goal, while preserving individual dignity, an important principle. Thus management choices define the organization and the performance achieved. (Anderson, 1997, pp. 27–28)

However Fletcher has not used the term "morality management", he introduced the concept of morality management into the contemporary applied ethics. As he showed the three above projects of morality assume distinct methods of managing morality: The legalist project of morality consist in a system of general rules and norms that are universal criteria of goodness or rightness of actions. The legalist morality management aims at fulfilling the law. It aims at introducing the moral code of conduct into practice. The antinomian morality management begins with arbitrary decisions about moral principles and norms. Each subject plans morality for himself or herself in order to elaborate a project of his or her life. Situationism requires managing moral norms in order to respect the principle of love. As Fletcher suggests managers of societies should plan systems moral norms in order to make people to respect the principle of love.

¹⁰⁵ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics* ... op. cit., p.152.

¹⁰⁶ B. Gert, "The Definition of Morality," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2012. Retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2012/entries/morality-definition/>

Situationists often express a desire to *defend* traditional morality, ostensibly limiting their motives to improving classical methods of applying traditional morality to life.¹⁰⁷ Yet while Fletcher distinguishes between *morality* and ethics as a *theory* about morality, he terms his approach to ethics the "new morality". He does so, not only to spread snappy jargon among journalists, but because situationism wants to bring ethics as close as possible to practice. It offers a theory of morality which strives for the greatest possible influence on people. Fletcher expresses this wish by subtitling his book on situation ethics "The New Morality."¹⁰⁸ This title does not indicate a new theory of morality. It indicates the change of morality. In order to explain the situationist method of morality management, one has to distinguish moral principles and moral norms.

Principles and Norms. The Situationist Project of Morality

Some ideals indicate directions of management. For example the ideal of (lat.) *perpetuum mobile* is the implicit goal of projecting economic cars.¹⁰⁹ The ideals may exist or not, be possible or not, be real or not. Some ideals belong to morality. They are called "moral principles" or "principles of morality". They are values: ultimate ends and forms of moral actions. For example, the ultimate ends of human actions are: happiness - according to eudemonism, human dignity - according to some streams of personalism, utility and human well being - according to utilitarianism. According to Immanuel Kant, the categorical imperative is the universal form of moral intentions. Etc.

One should distinguish moral norms from moral principles. Moral principles are non linguistic phenomena. Moral norms are linguistic phenomena. Moral principles are values, moral norms are criteria of moral assessments. Moral norms indicate methods of approaching, sustaining and supporting existence of moral principles, outline the code of conduct that is compatible with moral principles and optimize the principles in human actions. For example, if justice is the moral principle, moral norms indicate the conduct of just actions; if human well being is the moral principle, moral norms outline methods of respecting and promoting human well being. Etc. In situationist ethics love is the principle of morality. As Fletcher suggests, managers of morality should promote love and loving attitudes by managerial effort of planning, organizing and controlling morality and motivating people.

Morality management is similar to value management and to moral management in terms of organizing, motivating and controlling functions. Yet morality management differs from value management and moral management in respect of some planning functions. Value management and moral management

¹⁰⁷ "The label 'new morality' is not altogether justified. Its meaning in journalism is a relaxed or even lax, ethical outlook, especially in matters sexual. Two things should become clear as we proceed: (1) that the 'new morality' is not exactly new, either in method or in content, and (2) that as a method ... its **roots** lie securely, even if not conventionally, in the classical tradition of Western Christian morals. It's an old posture with a new and contemporary look." Fletcher J., *Situation ethics* ..., op. cit. pp.12-13.

¹⁰⁸ J. Fletcher, *Situation ethics* ..., op. cit. pp. 12-13.

¹⁰⁹ R. L. Ackoff, H. J. Addison, J. Magidson, *Idealized Design: Creating an Organization's Future*, Upper Saddle River, NJ, Wharton School Publishing, 2006.

plan according to moral principles and norms. In these approaches, moral principles and norms are not planned, because they are assumed in planning.¹¹⁰ In contrast, morality management aims at planning moral principles and norms.

As Fletcher shows, legalist morality management must be limited. In this approach moral principles and norms cannot be planned (they have to be recognized and respected). Fletcher believes that human freedom requires rational choices among moral norms and principles. In his opinion legalism does not allow for such a possibility. In the context of the legalist theories moral principles are ultimate criteria of rationality, and the only two ultimate options of planning moral principles are left – for or against moral principles. In the legalist approach choices against moral principles are not rational (by definition). The relativist ethical meta-theories assume plurality of competing moral codes of conduct, and therefore they allow to plan morality in terms of a rational choice among competitive moral systems.

The Importance of Situation Ethics for Management Sciences

Situation ethics has not been a very original philosophical theory. Yet it has much inspired contemporary applied ethics, because Fletcher has drawn important practical conclusion from his ethical relativism. As he maintains, the relativist approach requires questioning morality. Especially managers can and should decide about codes of moral conducts and can manipulate them in order to achieve desirable outcomes.

Situation ethics has evoked widespread discussions. Despite, or maybe because of, its critics, it has enjoyed a wide following, particularly among those who feel "lost" in the world of "things" and in the "legal structures" of the state and religious communities. Many such people feel that these structures have turned against human individuality and freedom, or have proven unable to safeguard humankind against self-destruction, as the two World Wars seem to show. Situationism has demanded from politicians and institutions the morality management in defense of human freedom and the autonomy of human conscience against the *quasi-mechanical* rules of social structures and organizations. Many thinkers have sympathized with such postulates, without openly professing the tenets of situationism. They saw some of its positive impacts on morality and saw situationism as a valuable contribution towards contemporary ethics. As Erwin W. Lutzer puts it,

- Although much of the debate which initially surrounded Fletcher's writings has subsided, the philosophy of situationism remains with us. Many who have never heard of Fletcher or the word *situationism* employ his *method* of making moral decisions. For this reason, an analysis of situationism is ever relevant [Fletcher's] writings provide the clearest statement of the new morality and the popularity of his book *Situation Ethics* elevated him to the position of chief spokesman for the situationists.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ C. Anderson, *Values-Based Management*, [in:] *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 50, no. 1, 1997, p. 27; A. B. Carroll, *Models of Management Morality for the New Millennium* [in:] *Business Ethics Quarterly*, Vol. 11, no. 2, 2001, pp. 367–368.

¹¹¹ E. W. Lutzer, *The Morality Gap: An Evangelical Response to Situation Ethics*, Chicago, Moody Press, 1972, p. 16.

Although the name situationism is neither influential nor well known, it is extremely influential and well known as a method of morality management. It has lost its appeal as a term, and the names of its proponents no longer dominate contemporary ethics, yet situationism has not disappeared from our ethics and morality. Quite the opposite - its latent development has become more influential than its "classical" origins in the Sixties. People know and affirm the ideas of situationism without knowing its name. Indeed, latent situationism grows more difficult to "detect" behind more sophisticated "covers".¹¹²

Situationism has reformulated the classical concept of responsibility (see, section 0). The situationist conception of responsibility has been considered a promising tool to manage the current crisis of values and has been developed (though often without referring to situationism) in postmodern approaches to ethics, especially in the idea of CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility.¹¹³

Situation ethics has strongly influenced contemporary bioethics¹¹⁴, the ethics of law¹¹⁵, and organizational and administrative ethics¹¹⁶. Situationism contributed to business and management ethics by stressing the role of virtues¹¹⁷ and attitudes¹¹⁸ in managerial decision making. Administrative ethics and the ethics of bureaucracy have been inspired by the situationist critique of legalism and antinomianism.¹¹⁹ The situationist method of decision making has influenced the pluralist conception of organizations¹²⁰ and of managerial practical reasoning.¹²¹ The ethical relativism of situation ethics may have inspired (or at least has been compatible with and played the role of an introduction to) postmodern ethics.¹²² Some thinkers believe that situation ethics is the most proper ethical model for marketing research.¹²³

¹¹² B. Gunn, *The Philosophy of Compentruism*, [in:] *International Review of Modern Sociology*, Vol. 18, no. 2, 1988, p. 208.

¹¹³ A. K. Koźmiński, *Zarządzanie w warunkach niepewności. Podręcznik dla zaawansowanych*, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2004, p. 56.

¹¹⁴ A. R. Jonsen et al., *Special Supplement: The Birth of Bioethics*, [in:] *The Hastings Center Report*, Vol. 23, no. 6, 1993; Childress J. F., *Reflections on Joseph Fletcher's Work*, [in:] *The Hastings Center Report*, Vol. 22, no. 1, 1992, p. 12.

¹¹⁵ M. Pieniążek, *Etyka Sytuacyjna Prawnika*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Prawnicze Lexis, 2008.

¹¹⁶ E. B. Lavery, *The Ethical Context of Administrative Decisions: A Framework for Analysis*, [in:] *Public Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 13, no. 3, 1989, pp. 375-387.

¹¹⁷ R. Kamtekar, *Situationism and Virtue Ethics on the Content of Our Character*, [in:] *Ethics*, Vol. 114, no. 3, 2004, pp. 458-491.

¹¹⁸ H. Harris, *Is Love a Management Virtue?* [in:] *Business & Professional Ethics Journal*, Vol. 21, no. 3, 2002, p. 180.

¹¹⁹ E. B. Lavery, *The Ethical Context of Administrative Decisions: A Framework for Analysis*, [in:] *Public Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 13, no. 3, 1989, pp. 377-378.

¹²⁰ E. B. Lavery, *The Ethical Context of Administrative Decisions: A Framework for Analysis*, [in:] *Public Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 13, no. 3, 1989, p. 379.

¹²¹ O. O'Neill, *Practical Principles & Practical Judgment*, [in:] *The Hastings Center Report*, Vol. 31, no. 4, 2001, pp. 15-23.

¹²² F. Debrix, *Specters of Postmodernism: Derrida's Marx, the New International and the Return of Situationism*, [in:] *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, Vol. 25, no. 1, 1999.

¹²³ G. S. Day, *The Threats to Marketing Research*, [in:] *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 12, no. 4, 1975, p. 462.

Already in the Sixties, situationists were proclaiming that situationism would become the most popular ethical ideology. It seems that their "prophecy" has to some extent been realized. Indeed, researches consider that situationism to be one of the most dominant type of ethical ideology in managerial decision making.¹²⁴

Concluding Remarks

The above analyses have not aimed at critique of situationism. They have presented three approaches to morality: legalist, antinomian and situationist. This paper has indicated the implicit concept of the morality management in situationism and some of its influences on the contemporary management ethics. Its conception of morality management deserves further investigation.¹²⁵

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¹²⁵ Situation ethics has been criticized in its theoretical and practical respects. For example, within the context of management ethics, some critical investigations of situationism have led to the conclusion that it has not sufficiently operationalized the principle of love and is helpless in interpreting the obligations that follow from managerial roles. See: De George R. T., *Theological Ethics and Business Ethics* [in:] *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 5, no. 6, 1986, p. 428. Some general criticisms demonstrate how situationism leads to contradictions, and often point to its practical consequences in the destruction of the individual and of society. Among others, see: Connery J. R., *Notes on Moral Theology*, [in:] *Current Theology*, Vol. 4, no. 15, 1954, pp. 594–626; Toulmin S., *Exploring the Moderate Consensus*, [in:] *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 5, no. 3, (1975, pp. 31–40).

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